

Town of Lincoln

Budget Board Meeting

December 15, 2005

Members Present:

Mary Varr Carl Brunetti Claudette Lussier Ken Booth

Jack Newman Joe Dziobek Roberta Gosselin Bob Ericson

Cheryl Ethier Linda Noble Greg Leonard

No members were absent.

Preceding the Budget Board Meeting was a School Subcommittee Meeting beginning at 6:45. Notes from that meeting are attached.

The Budget Board Meeting began at 7:45.

Ken Booth noted that people may now enter public comment at meetings such as the Town Council meetings but they may not have discourse on the matter if it is not on the meeting agenda.

The minutes of November 27th were distributed for review.

A note was made that Subcommittee meeting notes should be separate from Budget Board meeting minutes.

Joe Dziobek made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Linda Noble. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

Cheryl Ethier provided a School Subcommittee update. They did not receive an analysis of budgeted numbers compared with numbers actually expended, and they were not fully satisfied with the answers they received to their questions.

Roberta Gosselin thought that the schools should do a cost/benefit analysis of having full-time Kindergarten.

Linda Noble noted that the schools have not yet calculated the cost of operating the new middle school and that it will be an astronomical amount. The schools have a due date of their requested budget to the School Committee by January 9th.

The Budget Board discussed possibly moving their meeting time to 7:00 pm once they have the recommended budget to have work sessions.

The Budget Board discussed Health Care and Opt Out options. Roberta Gosselin noted that currently, Blue Cross does not have any motivation to lower their prices because they are the only company given as an option in the town's contracts right now.

The town will be looking into United or maybe the possibility of self-insuring.

Bob Ericson noted that he was surprised at how far the idea of a 9th grade academy without due process to decide the use of the current

middle school space.

The School Committee did update their website.

The Budget Board welcomed public comment and questions.

Benny Sisto stated that he will formally request an opinion on the public comment and feedback issue noted earlier to determine where the boundaries are drawn.

Benny also thought that the decision to self-insure for health insurance was a big decision that affected the budget tremendously and that it was not a decision that should be made unilaterally.

Benny thought that the School Department needed a bookkeeper, not an additional manager.

Greg Leonard made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Carl Brunetti. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

School Subcommittee Notes – 12/15/05

Present: John Tindall-Gibson, Jeff Weiss, Mary Varr, Jack Newman, Cheryl Ethier, Carl Brunetti, Joe Dziobek, Linda Noble

Medical Insurance projections were distributed including opt outs.

The opt outs receive the family rate because the assumption is that if they are opting out, it is because they are on a spouse's coverage.

The School Department went through the list of questions posed in advance by the subcommittee.

There were some errors in the information provided in response to the questions, but they will be fixed by the December 31st reports.

Jeff Weiss mentioned that the schools are checking into using self-insurance for health insurance and that currently, the staff is paying a 10.5% co-pay for certified staff and 10% for non-certified staff.

Tuitions are higher because they had 5 students move into town that require them.

Consultants at the High School are to help with the new state graduation requirements and to consult on the use of the extra space in the current middle school.

Linda Noble noted that there was an unexpected amount of Medicaid money but it concerned her that it was being used to fund new positions which are an ongoing expense when the same Medicaid money is not guaranteed in the future.

There was a packet distributed regarding energy efficiency and a plan

that would allow the improvements to a building's energy efficiency to be paid for by the money saved on the energy bills.

Jack Newman wanted to know if the outsourcing of payroll went out to bid yet. Jeff Weiss responded that it did.

Software to track substitutes will go out to bid, but there is one that is favored by the towns who have bid for similar programs.

A possibility for the current middle school space would be to expand the music, art and drama programs and also to have more space for Special Education so that more of the kids can stay in district.

It will not be possible to suspend kids for more than 10 days after new legislation, so money will be needed to train teachers on how to deal with difficult kids.

They are looking to hire an Assistant Manager for about \$60,000 and don't know if they could get a CPA for that salary.

Cheryl Ethier felt confident that they could hire a CPA for less than \$60,000 if the candidate was looking to get into the private sector and they were trainable.

The School Department gives their requested budget to the School Committee on January 9th.

In public comment, Benny Sisto asked who makes the decision to

self-insure health insurance. Jeff Weiss stated that it would be a consensus decision.